



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
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City of San Diego Proposes Water and Sewer Rate Increases to Pay for Rising Costs of Providing Services

**ANTICIPATED 2% RATE HIKE FROM COUNTY WATER AUTHORITY;
WASTEWATER FEE WOULD RISE FOR FIRST TIME IN A DECADE**

SAN DIEGO – For the first time in 10 years, the City of San Diego is looking to increase wastewater rates, by 5%, starting in January 2022. In addition, the City's Public Utilities Department (PUD), which provides water and sewer services to customers, is proposing to pass through regional water cost increases to its customers.

The rate increases for sewer services will help the City continue to upgrade core infrastructure by replacing aging pipes and sewer mains; and fund future investments like [Pure Water](#), a landmark water recycling project that will avoid wastewater treatment cost increases and reduce discharges to the ocean.

"The proposed rate increases come at a critical time for the City of San Diego with Pure Water's promise on the horizon and the need to fix our aging pipes and mains so we can continue to provide reliable wastewater collection and treatment," said Shauna Lorange, Director of PUD. "We know many San Diegans are struggling financially due to the pandemic, so we tried to minimize the impact as much as possible with this plan, knowing that our rising costs are forcing us to propose increases in order to deliver the high-quality services San Diegans expect."

PUD is one of the nation's largest water and sewer utilities serving over 2.2 million customers in the region. The department maintains over 3,400 miles of water pipelines and 3,000 miles of sewer mains, also operating 82 pump stations to keep wastewater flowing out of every community.

The City of San Diego currently imports as much as 90% of its water, the bulk of which is purchased from the San Diego County Water Authority (CWA) which serves 24 cities and water districts throughout the region. While the costs of purchasing water from CWA have risen over the past several years, the City is now proposing to pass on a rate adjustment for the first time in two years of approximately 2% starting in 2022. Water and sewer rates in San Diego are comprised of base fees and usage charges for various customer classes.

Last year, the City conducted a cost of service study on wastewater (sewer) rates to evaluate future revenue requirements for operating and capital costs. The study found that if the City's sewer rates remain unchanged, there will not be enough revenue to provide necessary wastewater and recycled water services between fiscal years 2022 and 2025. As a result, PUD is proposing a four-year consecutive rate increase starting with 5% in 2022, up to 4% in fiscal years 2023 and 2024, and up to 3% in fiscal years 2025 and 2026.

"This study is just the start of what will be an open and honest conversation with San Diegans about the importance of these new water and sewer rates as we continue our growth as one of the nation's largest cities," Lorance said. "The good news is that the Pure Water program is projected to provide long-term savings for sewer services because we will no longer need to pay for costly upgrades to our existing treatment plant. That's a big win for our customers."

There are a number of water conservation options that can reduce customers' water usage and therefore decrease utility bills, such as checking for leaks, decreasing irrigation and taking advantage of rebates. Less water use can also lead to lower wastewater charges. More information is available from the City at wastewater.org.

San Diego residents facing financial hardship due to the COVID-19 pandemic may qualify for funding through the Housing Stability Assistance Program to cover the costs of rent, utilities and internet service. To apply, visit covidassistance.sdhc.org. In addition, the City offers the [Help to Others \(H2O SD\)](#) program, a bill payment assistance option for qualified low and fixed income water utility customers.

Proposed water and wastewater rate increases are being presented to the City Council's Budget and Government Efficiency Committee on April 7. A full City Council vote is anticipated in mid-September.

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